

HORSES AND LAND- MARKS



SIDNEY ROYSE
LYSAGHT & • &



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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

POEMS OF THE UNKNOWN WAY

HORIZONS AND LANDMARKS



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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HORIZONS AND LANDMARKS

POEMS

BY

SIDNEY ROYSE LYSAGHT

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THREE AGES OF MAN	1
FIRST HORIZONS	3
THE FOUNTAIN-SPRINGS	14
OUR HOMELAND	18
SHELTER AND FELLOWSHIP	20
THE FOREST	23
FIRST LOVE	31
THE WORLD'S END	33
YOUTH	37
NEW HORIZONS	40
THE QUEST OF YOUTH	42
THE ROAD INTO THE WORLD	46
THE COUNTRY OVER THE HILL	53
YOUTH AND LOVE	58

	PAGE
THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH (I-IV.)	62
IN THE WORLD	71
HEARTH LIGHT	81
THE TEST OF FAITH	83
CHILDREN'S FAITH	91
A RUINED CHAPEL	93
NORTH AND SOUTH	98
INTERPENETRATIONS	101
LIFE AND LOVE	104
BRICK HORIZONS	105
FIRST PATHWAYS	109
HIDDEN PATHS	112
THE PATHS OF THE INFINITE	114
A DESERTED HOME	117
BEYOND THE FARTHEST HORIZON	119
A HALT ON THE WAY	126
OLD LANDMARKS	128

THREE AGES OF MAN

*THE child is part of all that he beholds ;
Youth with his dreams of love the world enfolds ;
Man takes life in his hands, and mars or moulds.*

*Freed of its load, washed of its gathered stain,
In the child's spirit life is born again.
Of all he sees and loves he is a part :
Faith lights his footsteps ; filtered through his
heart*

*The everlasting fountain-springs o'er-run
In rills of joy, and life and he are one.*

*Youth is life's lover, eager to embrace
And reach the soul that lights so fair a face ;
But, as the lover on the maid confers
From his own dreams a beauty more than hers,
So youth illumines with the radiant hues
Of heart's desire the vision he pursues.*

*Man is life's guardian ;—unknown issues wait
On his intent : his sight directs blind fate.
'Tis his before the Belly-god to kneel,
Or sow the harvests of life's commonweal,—
To quit his post, or guard through pain and death
The hope with which creation travaileth.*

*The child gives love, and makes the world his
own ;
Youth looks for harvests which he has not sown ;
Man shares God's burden on the road unknown.*

FIRST HORIZONS

AN open window filled with blue,
The scent of meadows wet with dew,
The talk of rooks beyond the park,
A cart wheel's creak, a sheep-dog's bark,
Greeted our waking : then we sped
Along the rushy path that led
Down to the peat-brown river pool,
And, glowing, dived through ripples cool,
While startled coots in skimming flight
Slipped among sedges out of sight,
Or from his lonely watch the crane
Rose on slow wings ; then out again

And home to breakfast. Oh, the smell
Of furze bloom and bog-asphodel
Along the track ! but still more sweet
The fragrance of the cakes of wheat,
The tea, the toast, the home-baked bread,
The roasted apples, all outspread
On damask white. Anon, our chairs
Pushed back, we knelt for morning prayers,
And, planning new adventures, heard
The voice devout but not the word.
No lingering then ;—a hundred things,
New schemes, imagined happenings,
Called us away to wood and field—
For any hour of life might yield
Some wonder, some unthought of bliss,
Some miracle we dared not miss.
And gladness, hidden in the springs
Of purpose at the heart of things,

Showed us a world where work was play,
And common labours of the day
Sweet service ; but we knew not then
The burdens men have laid on men,—
Nay, only those perennial tasks
Which earth of all her children asks
For fruitfulness ; and glad were we
Of that good fellowship to be ;
Nor sought more honour than to share
The sower's toil, the shepherd's care.
But most we loved the merry ring
Of whetted scythes, the rhythmic swing
Of mowers, and with fork and rake
All day to follow in their wake ;
And homeward in the eventide
On the piled waggon load to ride,
While, half asleep amid the hay,
Dim fields we saw and uplands grey,

And heard beneath our swaying load
The rumbling wheels along the road.

No need had we the world to roam
To find new shores, for round our home
Our undiscovered lands arose
In autumn mists, in winter snows.
On summer nights in whispering trees
We heard the wash of Indian seas,
And ripening waves of harvest rolled
Over our hills the realms of gold ;
And flood-time mapped familiar lands
With island shores and foreign strands ;
And tidings of unventured ways
We gathered in the darkening days
When leafless woods began to moan
And twilight opened gates unknown.

A narrower, homelier world we knew
In winter time, and kinder grew
The sheltering bounds of landmarks old ;
And, gathered within farm and fold,
The sound of voices and the stir
Of labour seemed the merrier
Because so lonely and so wide
And homeless was the world outside.
Then we discovered golden shores,
Our El Dorado's treasure stores,
Amid the piled up sheaves of grain
Within the barn ; and while the rain
Beat on the roofs we burrowed deep
In rustling caves, or from the heap
Threw down our golden citadel,
While girls unbound the sheaves that fell
For threshing, and as each new load
Between the spinning rollers flowed,

The hum of wheels, the engine's drone
A sudden octave fell in tone ;
And grain was stored, and billows soft
Of straw went rolling to the loft,
And out on skies of cheerless grey
The winnowed chaff was blown away.

But after days of winter rains
Came mornings when our window-panes
Were bright with sunshine and embossed
With silver trellises of frost ;
And out we rushed across the yard,
Down rutty cart tracks, frozen hard,
And round the farm sheds and the fold
To match our blood against the cold ;
And every one we met was gay,
And had the pleasant word to say.
What, then, were dreams of summer worth,

While magic regions of the north
Lay round us, and o'er fields of snow,
Along the river's overflow,
Were Arctic seas, with many a shore
And frozen inlet to explore?—
Or while we tracked through forests bare
Wild creatures to their hidden lair?
Or, when the snow had drifted deep,
We helped to find the scattered sheep,
Or, with the shepherds and their dogs,
Sat round a fire of brush and logs
At nightfall, when old tales were told
Of other days, and clear and cold
The starlight shone above the fold?

Not then, but when the wild South-west
Filled the dim land with its unrest
At twilight, and the woods began

To talk of things unknown to man,
And on the garden paths we heard
Strange footsteps, but no answering word
Came to our call ;—

’twas then the spell

Of mystery about us fell,
The awe that held us half-afraid
To pass beyond our gates, but made
The shelter of our homely bounds
So welcome, and familiar sounds
So sweet ; ’twas then before us rose
The vision of ancestral foes,
And in our ears old battle calls
At night around beleaguered walls
Rang ; and, though all was safe and still,
Old dangers set our hearts a-thrill,
And in the silent courtyard made
Each door and arch an ambuscade ;

And passing through our sleeping camp
We heard the stabled horses champ,
And started as a halter whirred
Along the chain rings when they stirred.

Then, with our day's adventures o'er,
Safe housed, we heard the muffled roar
Of winds without, and round the fire
Sought for the land of heart's desire,
Or sailed across the Spanish main
In well-loved books ; or lived again
In knightly days of long ago,
And heard the horn of Ivanhoe
At Ashby lists ; or, on his steed
At Acre, saw King Richard lead
His pilgrim soldiers, worn and thin,
That broke the ranks of Saladin :—
Till, in the thickest of some fight,

Or when the captive maiden's plight
Was sorest, suddenly the spell
Was broken, and a welcome bell
Our own forgotten days restored
And called us to the supper board ;
Where, with our elders gathered round,
Good cheer and fellowship we found,
And oft a neighbour or a guest
To tell the news or speed the jest.

And all too quickly afterwards
Our bedtime came, and at their cards
And talk we left them. In the hall
The firelight flickered on the wall,
Deep shadows thronged the winding stair,
And overhead, we knew not where,
A footstep fell upon the floor
Of some deserted corridor.

But, once within our cheerful room,
No hidden phantom of the gloom
Came near us ; and in bed we lay
And heard the wind that far away
Now seemed to blow,—as storms outside
Might seem to those whose vessels ride
Rocked on the gentle rise and fall
Of tides within the haven wall.

THE FOUNTAIN-SPRINGS

WERE they not memories of things known
before,—

Not the strange vision of an unknown shore,
That met us when in childhood we began
To look upon our dwelling-place, and ran
Fearless to meet our fortune ; when our eyes
Saw life with wonder, but without surprise ;
When, though newcomers, no strange note we
heard

In voice of wind or wave or song of bird ;
And looking on the hills and trees and flowers
We loved, and without question made them ours ;

And trusted the dumb creature and the hand
That guided us, nor sought to understand ?
Were they not greetings of things old and
dear,—

Not the strange voices of an alien sphere,—
That greeted us and linked us, with a bond
Of speech familiar, to some home beyond ?

We were a part of all that we beheld
In those young days : it was our joy that welled . . .
Into the sunshine with the mountain rill,
Our heart that in the rose's heart lay still,
Our wings that held the sea-bird o'er the foam,
Our feet that brought the wandering outcast
home.

Earth had no secret that we could not share,
For everything we saw and loved we were.

Not when defenceless on the earth we stood
In childhood doubted we that life was good.
Not when love made us part of everything
Could we distrust the hidden fountain-spring.
But when the years began to separate
From Life our lives, when all that once seemed
great

In heaven and earth, all wonder and delight
Were narrowed to the measure of our sight ;
When knowledge of the suffering and wrong
That nature dealt the weak to serve the strong,
When records of man's greed and lust and pride
Defaced life's beauty, and its hope belied,—
How had we then that mockery withheld,
Or trusted that the source of life was good,
Had not the memory of its old caress
Reproached our hearts in their unfaithfulness ;
Had we not once beheld a face so sweet

It could not but express a heart that beat
For us, and knew what waited us, the while
It armed us for the darkness with its smile ;
Had we not known those vanished hours that
wove
Of homely human bonds immortal love ;
Of flowers, and stars, and woods, and mountain
streams,
And things that die, imperishable dreams ?

OUR HOMELAND¹

OURS was a land of green and gold ;
More gold than green, when every fold
Of down and upland was a blaze
Of furze in bloom on April days.
But when the summer-time was o'er,
And fields of corn against the moor
Waved gold on purple, and a haze
Of sunlight filled the woodland ways,
And far-off mountain boundaries
Made azure lines on azure skies,

¹ Here, and in the other poems of this volume, with few exceptions, the country described is the south-west of Ireland.

And earth and heaven together drew,
Ours was a land of gold and blue.
Yet sometimes, just at evenfall,
When every old grey limestone wall
And crumbling tower and rocky height
Caught the last gleam of level light,
And in the west a crimson glow
Flushed the high cloud-field's broken floe,
And deepening shades encompassed us,
And domes of coral cumulus
Above the mountains far away
In opal waters mirrored lay,
Ours was a land of rose and grey.

SHELTER AND FELLOWSHIP

IN the midst of life unknown,
Spaces boundless, pathways lone,
Earth of things that pass and fade
Homely shelter round us made,—
Dropped a veil of changing light
O'er the changeless infinite,
Over the unfathomed drew
Morning's gold and noonday's blue,
Lifted in the evening skies
Rose-illumined boundaries,
Wove the light of moon and stars
Into silver prison-bars.

We forgot what deeps we winged
Ere we found our place on earth,
Ere the blue horizons ringed
Sheltered homelands of our birth.

Whispers of the unknown spoke

Through our dreams ; but all we know
Waited for us when we woke
On the green earth long ago.

Love we found, and welcome kind,

Fellowship with everything
We were playmates of the wind,
Comrades of the bird on wing.

Creatures dumb we understood,
Knew them kin,—the shy or bold,—
Hid with these in cave and wood,

Watched with those o'er hearth and fold.
Happy on our way we went,
Meadow secrets, forest clues,

Learning from the firwoods' scent,
Winning from the wild flowers' hues.

Trusting life itself, we grew
One with all we loved and knew ;
Every thought we sent a-wing
Linked us with some living thing ;
Every kindness that we did
Treasure for us somewhere hid.
So, outside ourselves was sown
All that grew to be our own ;
So we put our wealth in trust
Past the reach of moth and rust.
Wherefore, no defeat or lure
Now can leave us wholly poor ;
Never can we fail to find
Somewhere a sweet face and kind,—
Somewhere shelter and a friend
Waiting at the journey's end.

THE FOREST

FAR away to hills of blue,
Sunlit pastures, uplands wide,
Ways familiar, homes we knew,
Round us lay on every side
Save on one ; on one alone,
Where the ancient forest spread,
Paths began with ends unknown,
Twilight loomed in daylight's stead.

Soft as waves of summer seas
Flowing on a lonely strand,
Rolled along that wall of trees
Shining waves of meadow-land ;

Bright as founts of lighted spray
Tossed against a rocky ledge,
Banks of primrose, boughs of May
Fringed the forest's sombre edge.

Here the wild domain began
Touched not by the hand of man,
Tangled, orderless, o'er-grown,
Tended not nor reaped nor sown,
Yet majestically decked
In the robes of its neglect,
With the forms that beauty shaped
Out of its confusion draped :—
Beauty that our youthful eyes
Sought not, but in other guise
Reached us, and before our feet
With a reassurance sweet,
When the path was dark and drear
Into wonder changed our fear.

Soon the spirit of the woods
Made us creatures of its own,
Charmed us to its ancient moods,
Tuned us to its sombre tone ;
Whispered in the tangled deeps,
Showed us, in the twilight rays,
Secrets that the noonday keeps,
Wonders lost on homely ways.

Where the forest creatures led
Lay our path ;—the fox that crept
Through the fern, or, overhead,
Squirrels that before us leapt,
These we followed, or perchance
Startled herds that past us flew,
Leaving but an antler's glance
Through the tree trunks for a clue.

In their wildness something stirred
Eager passion of the chase,

Made us foes of beast and bird,
Spoilers of the nesting-place ;
Yet their wildness we could share,
We were creatures of the wood,
With them reached the hidden lair
Not pursuing, but pursued.
These, the wild and timid things,
Kinship in our hearts awoke,—
These we knew ; but whisperings
Came of strange unearthly folk,—
Dwarfs, and Leprechauns and elves,—
Seen by others, not ourselves ;
Though at times a cry's escape,
Or a gliding shadow-shape,
Proved them near us as they stole
Out of sight from bole to bole ;
Or when from the unknown track
Half afraid we hastened back,

While the night began to close
Round us and the wind arose :
Then throughout the forest stirred
Old enchantments, and we heard
Rushing wings of phantom hosts
Overhead ; and whispering ghosts,
Outcasts of forgotten tombs
Wandering through the forest glooms,
Crossed our path ; and demons grim
Hung on every creaking limb.
Then how glad were we to near
Homely ways and human cheer,
When, beyond the forest bounds,
Once again familiar sounds
Reached us, and the end of day
Glimmered on horizons grey,
Over uplands far away.

Golden morrows showed no mark,
Glittering pathways gave no trace,
Where those legions of the dark
Made their noonday hiding-place.
Where the elfin hosts had rushed,
Where had fallen the wizard bane
Not a flower had been crushed,
Never dewdrop had a stain.

Then an idle way we took
Where the little wandering brook,
Overflowing mossy wells,
Flashing out of twilight shades,
Beckoned us to secret dells,
Led us into fairy glades.
Here the sunlight filtered through
Woven trellises of blue,
Dropping from a sky unseen
Into hollows golden-green.

Jays, in azure flashes, slid
Out of hollows where they hid ;
Golden crested wrens among
Feathery boughs of larches hung ;
Gentle winds in dreaming firs
Touched æolian dulcimers ;
Dancing shadows fell across
Fairy rings on floors of moss ;
Over rocks of weathered grey
Tapestries of wild rose lay ;
Here the forest's magic spells
Hung on dappled foxglove bells ;
Here the dreams of twilight pale,
Stealing out to golden light,
Shaped themselves in petals frail
Clothed themselves in blossoms white.

Not within the golden dell
Could we rest :—the wild and lone

Laid on us a stronger spell,
Called us to a world unknown.
Down untrodden paths would break
Gleams remote, that still foretold
New discoveries to make,
Always greater than the old.
There, beyond us, never gained,
Lay the regions of our quest,
There our wonderlands remained
Unbeholden, unpossessed ;—
Wonderlands no truth could mar,
Dreams no wakening could blot,
Lovelier because so far,
Real because we found them not.

FIRST LOVE

OUR treasures hardly seemed our own,
And barren our adventures were
Till comrades shared them :—one alone
I could not share.

We had no aims nor joys apart,
No secret we could long withhold :
One only, hidden in my heart,
I kept untold.

I see the little village church,
The faces that we used to know,
The parson in his pulpit-perch,
The clerk below ;

The bare grey walls, the windows dim,
The crystal stains that filtered through
The golden wings of seraphim,
The robes of blue.

A sudden ray of sunshine fell
Soft on a little maiden's hair,
And, lo ! a joy I dared not tell,
And could not share.

My treasure hardly seemed my own,
My secret joy a burden grew,
In fear lest others had been shown
Its wonder too.

Her heart my secret never guessed ;
And she is gone,—I know not where:
And now with those who loved her best
The loss I share.

THE WORLD'S END

WHERE did they end,—those pathways wild
and lone

Through the dark forest? Lay some shore
unknown

Beyond them, where the wind first taught the
trees

The sweet sad voices of the murmuring seas?

Oh, whither did they call? The long arcades

Led ever to remoter, dimmer shades;

And from the farthest crest a pathway dipped

Down to some lonelier aisle or darker crypt.

Dear were the open fields to us, and dear
The homely path, the sound of human cheer ;
But 'twas the way no foot of man had worn,
The forest's undiscoverable bourne,
That made our world so wide, its end so
far :

And when, in the evening through the trees, a
star
Shone o'er the darkening solitudes, it seemed
Nearer than those long quests of which we
dreamed.

One day we wandered farther than before
Through leafy maze and dusky corridor
Into the forest's heart, when far away
We saw a low horizon line of grey
Where all before was dark ; and by degrees
Through wider openings among the trees

The daylight grew ; and we who thought we
stood

Deep in the hidden cloisters of the wood
Were at its end,—only at last to find
A world like that which we had left behind.
There, out beyond us in the evening gold,
Lay homely meadowlands, and farm and fold :
The path we followed to the unknown shore
Led in the end but to some cottage door.

There, with the forest's end, those regions vast
That childhood showed us, into dreamland
passed.

The great world was beyond us ; far away,
Over the hills, the lands we knew not lay,—
But others knew them ! Now the secret clue
We followed melted in the noonday's blue,
Or hid among the stars. That broken road

Taught us the boundaries of our abode,—
The gulf 'twixt heaven and earth. A bridge
unseen
The hope or faith of man might build between
Our home on earth and some celestial shore ;
But 'twas for us no longer to explore
The paths of brave adventure which we trod
In childhood, to the unknown lands of God.

YOUTH

THE child is not the dreamer ; but the youth.
No dream can lend enchantment to the truth
In childhood, and no glamour from afar
Can make its paths more wondrous than they
are.

Nor was there any need for us to dream
When every field and flower and hill and stream
Fulfilled the heart's desire, and hope could feign
No love or joy our world did not contain.

The dreamer is the youth who finds the ends
Of paths that once were endless, who ascends

The peaks that once in heaven seemed to
glow,

Only to see the glory spread below ;

For whom the rose of eve, the morning's gold,

The starlight shining over field and fold,

The voice of wind and wave, the wild flowers'
scent,

Waken a want where once they brought content.

He dreams : the vanished wonder that those
days

Of childhood showed him on familiar ways

He cherishes,—he dreams that they exist

On pathways still afar or somewhere missed.

Where knowledge from his world the beauty
stole,

The inborn light of beauty in his soul

Relumes it, and endows a world unseen

With all the splendour of the might-have-been.

Pleasures beguile him, and that light within
Lends its own beauty to the face of sin,
Or flares to fire of passion that consumes
The very loveliness its light illumes.

He dreams of love, and every pathway's bend
Holds him expectant, every journey's end
Gives promise of the tryst, the hour supreme
That shall reveal the maiden of his dream.
His faith is in himself : he would reform
The world with love, and take his Heaven by
storm.

The great adventure calls him : he would build
On earth his visions, and his heart is thrilled
Those labours to complete which God left
unfulfilled.

NEW HORIZONS

NEVER was there path our childhood used to
roam
So long it led not in the evening home ;

Nor could the magic of the unknown track
Prevail against the hearth that called us back.

Over the same hill-tops, wild-rose or grey,
Our evening and our twilight always lay ;

And when the night fell all the unknown stars
Grew homely shining through our window bars.

Now we have fared to the country o'er the hill,
And unknown journeys lie beyond us still ;—

Ways unadventured, countless paths to roam,
But none that leads us in the evening home.

Onward, not homeward, some adventure calls
With every dawn, and every evening falls

Over new horizons, wild-rose or grey,
And old stars shining on the unknown way

Strange look and far, not those we saw of old
Safe moored in haven skies above our fold.

THE QUEST OF YOUTH

YEAR by year the hills of blue
That bounded our homeland nearer drew,

One by one the old enchantments
Passed away from the paths we knew.

Many a boon the old days brought,
Many a joy that we held as nought,
Hopes, but never the great fulfilment,
Love, but never the love we sought.

Now we must part from home and friend.
We have treasures of youth to spend :
Braver ventures, fairer maidens
Wait for us where the old ways end.

Now for the quest unknown, untried,
Now for the path with none to guide.

Dawns that glimmer on new horizons,
Starlit camps on the mountain side.

For our dreams remain, and the wonders flown
From the world that we knew and called our
own,

Are ours to follow by shores uncharted,
Ours to seek in a land unknown ;

Dreams that give to the thing life shows,
What the sky gives earth, when the evening
glows

On the lonely hills, and the distant places
Blossom in gold and purple and rose.

Spake to us voices of scorn and ruth :
“ He who follows the dreams of youth,

He who seeks for an outworn wonder
Flies himself from the whips of truth."

" For yours is nought but the hunter's zest ;—
Your love but love of the unpossessed.

Is the world God filled with the light not
fairer
Than all the dreams of your soul's unrest ? "

Ah no ! the world that God designed
He shows us in dreams, but leaves mankind
To shape to His plan. The goal He gave,
But the path to the goal 'tis ours to find.

No meaner plan than our dream unrolls
Can ever again content our souls ;
The wonder fades from the paths around us,
Our faith remains in the unseen goals.

The wonder outlasts, the goals exist ;
The beauty abides, but the way we missed ;
And a mile may open the way we looked for
A turn may lead to the longed-for tryst.

THE ROAD INTO THE WORLD

WE travelled by an old and beaten road,
But everything we saw was strange and new :
Each ripple of the mountain stream that
 flowed
Beside us, every drop of sunlit dew
That filled the flowers that on the wayside
 grew,
The laughter of the south-west wind at play
Along its own untrodden path of blue,
All made the earth forget its yesterday,
And with their own youth touched that old
 and beaten way.

They told us that our road would lead at last
Into the world,—not that which once was
spread

Before our childhood's dream, unknown and
vast,

But one which man had fashioned in its stead.

This world lay now before us, and we sped
To drink its wonders, counting not the cost.
Our endless pathways to their ends had led ;
The bounds of our unbounded we had crossed ;

The unknown way was found, but our old
world was lost.

We had exchanged our infinite domains,
The undiscovered regions of our quest,
For the round earth wherein no sea remains
Uncharted, and no land is unpossessed ;
But still our hearts were filled with the old zest

48 THE ROAD INTO THE WORLD

To travel and adventure and explore :
The unknown called us, we could find no rest
Till, by those paths which men had trod before,
We found the world they found and bore the
loads they bore.

With every soul that on the earth is born
The whole creation is made young again ;
And all the paths that pilgrim feet have worn
Are new for those who follow,—every stain
That marred them is washed out by sun and
rain,
And verdure fresh makes all their borders
sweet.
So on that road of bygone joy and pain,
With the day's new-born flowers about our feet,
We sought an ancient world grown young our
youth to greet.

And pleasant of that world it was to think,
And all that we had heard in song and lore
Of old grey cities on the ocean's brink,
Where to their anchorage the great ships
bore

Bales from the Orient, and golden store
From the far south, and, dark and grim and
tall,
Behind the dreaming masts rose floor on floor,
Warehouse and granary, and over all
Loomed some great tower or dome of Mary or
of Paul.

The vanished regions of our old surmise
We mourned not now, for eager we had grown
To read the record of the centuries,
And enter the great kingdoms of the known.
Ay ! better than the unexplored and lone

We deemed that world in which the human
heart
Was written, where mankind had built and
sown,
And fought for truth and love, and taken part
In the eighth day's creation—God-inspired
Art.

And now our island earth, our bounded home
Took new dimensions,—Time transfigured
Space ;

And we beheld vast realms through which to
roam

Within the limits of our dwelling-place.

Dim pathways of the past we turned to pace,
And far receding vistas of the years
Opened old wonderlands ; 'twas ours to trace
The labyrinths of love, the vales of tears,

And toward the unknown future march as
pioneers.

Along the borders of that beaten way
Was many a landmark of man's mortal fate ;
But hope was ever written in decay,
And simple things interpreted the great.
A charm was in the wild flowers to translate
Death's ruth, a benediction in the stone
Of ruined abbey walls to consecrate
The skies that roofed them, and to link the
lone

Illimitable paths of heaven with our own.

But for far heavenly paths we had no care
While still that road before us was untried,
And the world called to us its joys to share,
Its lore to read, its destinies to guide.

Our hearts were filled with a terrestrial pride ;
We loved our world and gloried in the fame
Of those who in its service lived and died,
Who fought and laboured to create its claim
Amid the countless spheres to hold an honoured
name.

To other gods than ours the past has knelt,
And creed and cause may sever us or bind ;
But here upon our common road we felt
The bond of bonds that links all humankind,—
Man's pilgrim fellowship. Through rain and
wind,
In sunshine and beneath the starry deep,
There is one goal for all the world to find,
A sacred hope to guard, a watch to keep,
And in a little while the comradeship of sleep.

THE COUNTRY OVER THE HILL

IT was evening, and we came to the country
over the hill,
A valley of ancient homes and fields with
shadowy trees.

The south-west wind was soft with the breath
of the south-west seas ;

Our unknown pathway followed the wandering
song of a rill.

Flowers we knew in the homeland bordered
the unknown way ;

Things we had known and loved in the paths
we had left behind,

Only these we found,—the song of the south-west wind,
Gold of the evening, rose of the sunset, twilight grey.

But the way, the way was unknown, and each turn of the way unguessed,
And the spell of the unforeseen transfigured the things we knew,
And filled the whispering woods and the flowers that hung in the dew,
And dreamed on the darkening hills and the roselit cloud in the west.

Twilight fell on the land, and clear against vistas dim
Near things stood large,—the towers of ancient elms

Loomed on glimmering fields, dark keeps of
shadowy realms ;

And the first stars shone in the eastern sky on
the upland's rim.

One by one around us, golden lights in the
dusk

Glowed in many a window of unseen cottage
and farm :

And sweet through the cool of the dew came
ripples of air still warm

From the shelter of old walled gardens that
breathed of honey and musk.

We came to a little village and our rest at the
long day's close :

The stars shone over the street where the
folk were lingering still ;

The stars looked down on the stars in the
dark pool under the mill ;
The infinite deeps of the heaven were touched
with the earth's repose.

Bright heavenly tracts outshone ; but never a
way so sweet
As a homely path on the earth where the
wild flowers hid in the dew,
And a girl went home through the fields, and
the darkness thrilled with a clue
That linked the loneliest star with the flowers
she touched with her feet.

And pleasant it was to rest awhile in that old-
world nook,
And dream of the unknown way and the
country over the hill,

THE COUNTRY OVER THE HILL 57

While the stars shone down on our beds,
and the village street was still,
And sleep came over the fields in the wandering
song of the brook.

YOUTH AND LOVE

OVER our pilgrim fellowship there came
A change, and though our road was still the
same
Our dreams divided us, and visions fair
Filled us with longings that we could not
share.

All that once called us to the unknown quest
Was hidden now within a maiden's breast ;
All that was far away and wild and sweet
Shone in her eyes and blossomed at her feet.
She was our wonderland, our golden shore,
The unknown world we travelled to explore,

Our goal, not one far distant and unseen,
But near, and with no barrier between
To check us or to hide it from our sight,
Save our own hesitation or her flight.

Across the beaten road she passed ; she led
Through trackless regions, beckoned us or fled,
We knew not which ; we knew not if her face
Appealed for help, or called us to the chase.
Strife and confusion to our lives she brought,
But life itself in lovelier hues she wrought.
She was our spirit's guide, our passion's lure :
She was the world's undoing and its cure.

Of this enchantment, of the wild pursuit
That woke in us the errant knight or brute,
Of this confusion that upon us fell,
Some do not speak, and none the same thing
tell ;

And some were lost or made themselves a
track

Through lands unknown, and some at last
came back,—

One with a new light shining in his eyes,

One with the burden of his memories,

One with his blood for new pursuit on fire,

One weary seeking for his heart's desire ;

And one who brought back to the beaten road

A song of love that lightened half our load.

Comrades we met again ; but though the way
Was still the same, and though the night and
day,

The flowers at our feet, the stars above,

Shone as before,—the mystery of love

Filled heaven and earth with something new
and sweet

And wild and sorrowful and incomplete,
And once more called us to the unknown
quest
To seek the unfulfilled and unpossessed.

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

I

SHE tempted him ; for such was Nature's plan,
Who, thinking of the fruit, the flowers
arrayed,
And seeking for the surest guardian
Of life to be, gave beauty to the maid.

He courted her with glowing flatteries,
With praises that he then deemed nought
but truth,
While all he sought seemed hidden in her
eyes,
And all the joy of earth was in her youth.

He gave her the brief homage of desire ;
She gave him what a maid but once can
give ;
She lit, but could not keep alight, love's fire ;
They parted, they had still their lives to
live.

And many a merry bout with many a lass
Had he, until a wiser course he saw,
And wedded a fair lady of his class
Who bore him children sanctioned by the
law.

She kept her secret and her love of life,
And, wistful sometimes when that episode
Her dreams recalled, became an honest wife,
And shared with a good man the common
load.

II

Another of our comrades, in those days
When wisdom has for youth no argument,
And conscience on him no commandment lays
That can prevail against a maid's consent,—

He also found that 'twas the hot pursuit
And not the maiden that inspired his zest ;
And other fairer maids of fleeter foot
Called him from one too easily possessed.

But she was not of those who make the slip
And miss the fall, like many a merry dame :
She felt the tightening of dishonour's grip,
Still loving him who brought on her the
shame.

And one day walking by a river bank,
He found a little group of villagers

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH 65

Standing beside a body, dead and dank,—
And when he looked the face he saw was hers.

The conduct of these comrades was akin,
Though the world read it in the sequel's light :
The one through life recalled a pleasant sin ;
Remorse pursued the other day and night.

And, are you Nature's weakling instrument,
Your fortune may be such as prompts a laugh
Among good fellows ; or the fire she lent
May burn into your soul an epitaph.

III

He was a man whose instincts all inclined
To virtue, when the path of virtue led
Through pleasant places ; venial, but too kind
To wrong a woman, and too poor to wed.

F

66 THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

She, weak and all too generously dowered
By Nature with the warmth of womanhood,—
Her Tree of Life was wantonly deflowered
Ere she had learned the evil and the good.

She joined the outcast sisterhood who play
The loveless parts of love that they may live,
And feigned the passion that had ebbed away,
And sold what she was born on earth to give.

See love, that once like crystal springs welled up
In cloisters of the hills without a stain,
Here served as from a common drinking cup
Held at a city fountain by a chain !

Chance brought these two together, and they
played
At lover's parts, while each the falsehood
guessed :

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH 67

She read old Brute Desire's masquerade,
He knew that 'twas his gold that she caressed.

His heart was touched with less of scorn than ruth
For her and for her sisters ; soon he paid
Not with gold only, but with dreams of youth,
And half his former faith in man and maid.

Soon was her brief career of folly run ;
And, beauty fading, left her poor indeed ;
Nor, of her hundred lovers, was there one
To help her in the hour of pain and need.

IV

Of those whom Passion's wandering desires
Drove or beguiled to gates that duty barred,
The contest of the elemental fires
Of flesh and spirit strengthened some, some
marred.

68 THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

These conscious of the right, to sin afraid,
Obedient in deed but not in heart,—
These never brought dishonour on a maid,
Nor left their gold with women of the mart ;

But, while the outward evil they eschewed,
They lusted for the fruit they dared not
touch ;
The path they feared to tread their dreams
pursued,
And left them bondsmen in temptation's
clutch ;

Who ruled by appetites they dared not feed,
And cursed by passions that were meant to
bless,
Learnt that to such abstention is decreed
Punishment stern as that which smites excess.

THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH 69

The others no less warm of blood than they,
Like them by duty checked in the pursuit,
Disdained to peer through gates that barred
the way,
And feed their fancies on forbidden fruit.

Their faith in love, like the clear noonday lit
Those tangled pathways of the lure, the mesh :
They went their way refusing to submit
To tyrannies of conscience or of flesh.

They matched their wills with nature's brutal
force,
And readily their servant it became :
Their joy was like the rider's in the horse
Whose spirit he controls but would not tame.

Life's keen activities, the toil, the play,
The venture, all that put their strength to test,—

70 THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH

These sped their thoughts and turned their
hearts away
From sloth's seductions and desire's unrest.

But Love was with them : no unchecked desires
Or wandering fancies ever brought the thrill,
The joy in womanhood, that lit love's fires
In these of the clean blood and strengthened
will.

For them love's passion, when it found its rest,
Glowed with a light no after-gloom could mar,
Soft as the wild-rose glory in the west
That, fading, lifts the veil that hides a star.

IN THE WORLD

Is this the world we sought? Is this our dream
Of life's warm heart; and yon divided host!

Is that the camp that marks the latest stage
On man's adventurous quest? Full well we
knew

That we had left behind the peace that dwells
In quiet woodland ways. Yes, for we dreamed
Of danger and of strife, of sorrow and sin;
But always in our dream a battle song
Called us to fields unwon, and evermore,
Above the failure and the sacrifice,
We heard the voice of hope that told the world

It laboured not in vain. Is this that world ?
This the great comrade host ? Our eyes are
dim ;
For we have seen the saddest sight on earth,—
Her faithless millions.

Toil and strife and sin,
Pity and love we see ; but what that speaks
Of man's belief in a great destiny ?
What symbol shines before us ? Not the
sword !—
The noble cause unsheathes it not : we fight
Not to save others, nay, we hardly dare
To fight to save our honour or ourselves.
The cross ? It stands aloft on spire and dome,
An ornament above the empty church,
While underneath it in the market-place
We kneel, we bow before the Belly-god.
He is our own ! Behold we fashioned him !

We fattened him, as bees create their queen,
Shaped him with our inventions, in his frame
Ordered blind forces to mechanic law.
But lo ! his breath is but an engine throb ;
He knows not love nor ruth ; he has no soul,—
This idol in our midst, our Belly-god.
He offers us the substance of the known,
He asks no faith in the unseen, he prompts
No sacrifice that earns not its reward.
Comfort and wealth he promises to man,
He shows the poor the gold he gave the rich
And bids them take it, and the rich he arms
Against the poor.

How different a world

From that we pictured, when we watched the
dawn

Break on the blue horizon of the hills
That ringed our quiet homeland, and we dwelt

Among the scattered friendly folk. Our dreams
Then told us of profounder tides of life,
Nobler activities, more glorious tasks,
Born of the strength of numbers ; now we see
Weakness, not strength, in numbers, where no
cause,

No common faith unites them ; now we hear
The sound of the great moving multitude
That marches without goal or leader, nay,
That marches not, but spreads.

What profits it
That man shall gain the world and lose his
soul ?

What that he conquer nature and enslave
Her forces, if he stands himself a slave
Ruled by his own inventions ? What that bread
Be cheaper to the poor, if life itself
Have lost its savour, and the daily toil

Grown so mechanical, themselves become
But parts of the machine they tend ? 'Twere
well
If they could see in this dull servitude
Some noble purpose, or behold at last
Its help to the world ; but they discern no end
Save riches gathered, and the luxury
They envy but can never hope to share.
What have we gained in welfare to atone
For beauty lost ? This spreading human mass
Has marred earth's lovely ways with steam and
oil,
And soon will desecrate the paths of heaven
With loud excursions. Soon the earth will keep
No hiding-place for Pan, no solitude
Among the hills, no cloisters of the woods.
And what of that if Nature's loveliness
Were but a sacrifice ? if for that loss

The world had gained new joy? if the wild
charm
Of solitude, the beauty that the feet
Of men destroy had passed into their souls,
And gave the weary toilers of the town
New hope? But no! the beauty we destroy
Leaves us no child behind: humanity
Is robbed for ever; and the poor, for whom
Beauty was the one priceless thing on earth,
Save love, that without payment was their
own,—

They are the most bereft.

How shall we stay
This thing called progress, this machinery
Fashioned by man to drive and crush himself,
This crafty servant of the Belly-god,
That multiplies our wealth and starves our
souls?

Was it for this vile servitude that man
Contended through the ages with the powers
Of darkness, till at last he saw the star
Of Freedom shining on his onward way ?
Out of that vast contention, from that Hell
Of suffering and sacrifice at last
Rising victorious, the victory
Should be indeed heroic, and the goal
Beyond it something nobler than the quest
Of treasure upon earth ;—ay, though that wealth
Be subdivided, and mankind become
A brotherhood of prosperous shareholders.

This is the world ! Our dream of life's warm
heart
Beating with greater purposes, and fired
With nobler aims, where the great companies
Of men are gathered :—all is unfulfilled ;

And yet our dream lives on !

Oh, cherish it !

'Twas given us to guard : 'tis the design
Of the Eternal Architect, revealed
To earthly toilers ; and 'tis not for man
To shape his dreams to fit the world he finds,
But to rebuild the world to fit his dreams.

What of ourselves, who looking on the world
Condemn its faithlessness ? How weak indeed
Must be our own faith if our hope for man
Fails because here the march is retrograde
And there the goal is hidden. We have
mourned
Beauty deflowered, and paths of old romance
Trotted to dust ; but we remembered not
The waste reclaimed, the pestilential swamp
Drained of its poison. While in vain we sought

The faith that led the old world's pioneers
Through desert places, we forget that Hell
Of superstition, bigotry, and fear
That tortured countless souls, that bondage vile
From which the world has freed itself at last.
Foul things that never shall be seen again
Have been uprooted ; but the beautiful,
The old and lovely things that now are not,—
These are not dead, but in our dreams they
 hide,
Till love shall charm them back into the world.

'Tis man's to build ; our dream shows God's
design :
The misinterpretation of our dream,
Our faithlessness, is written in the world ;
But still the dream remains ;—'tis born again
With every child that comes from the unknown

Into our mortal life. 'Twas not for us
To look for the fulfilment of our dream,
Or find our heart's desire upon the earth :
But it is ours to labour ; ay, 'tis ours
Into our labour to translate our dreams.

Come ! for our labour calls us to the world,—
The world that bows before the Belly-god
To whom men sacrifice their dreams divine
For meats that perish. Are they satisfied ?
Are they not crying, Give us back our dreams ?
Come ! 'tis for those who have not sold their
dreams
To stand together and to lead the world.

HEARTH LIGHT

THERE was a home we used to know
Far, far away,—long, long ago ;
So far away, it often seems
A land of ghosts, a world of dreams ;
And yet so near, a wind that stirs
A twilight whisper in the firs,
A little river's wandering tune,
A silver sea-way in the moon,
A flower's scent is all we need
Thither to call us, thither lead.
Then we are shown each kind old face
And every half-forgotten place

Unchanged : we see the raindrops still
Undried upon the daffodil
On April mornings, still behold
Long-garnered harvests waving gold
On blue horizons, hear again
The winter sound of wind and rain
That filled the land on evenings drear,
And gave our hearth a homelier cheer,—
That hearth whose light has since out-flowed
On every dark and wintry road,—
Whose memory has come to raise
A shelter round our homeless days,
And brought us on our unknown quest
Promise of haven, dreams of rest.

THE TEST OF FAITH

WE had no need of faith in those young days
When we went forth on the world's unknown
ways,
When joy from every fount of life welled out,
And beauty over-ran its crystal springs.
We could not ask if life were good or ill
When all our dreams it promised to fulfil,
We could not fear the unknown road, nor
doubt
That love divine was at the heart of
things.

All is the same, all but ourselves, and we !
Do our eyes fail or but too clearly see ?
For we remember how our hearts leapt up
With each new day that dawned upon the
earth.

Was it then but a vision we beheld,
And but our youthful spirits that out-welled,
That now the fountain is an unfilled cup,
And where we looked for harvest there is
dearth ?

We know not when our faith began to wane,
Or whether 'twas the sight of wrong and pain,
The knowledge of a world wherein the strong
Preyed on the weak, that wakened our
distrust ;
Whether it was the torture that we saw,
Dealt in obedience to Nature's law,

That made us ask if such a world of wrong

From dust evolved should not return to
dust.

Was God, we asked, the shaper of that plan
Of brutal strife from which the soul of man
Emerged? could man, a creature born of
earth,

Find beyond earth a place to house his
soul?

Or was it all a pattern chance had traced,
A pattern that would be again erased;
Were strife, and wrong, and love, and death,
and birth,

But motions of a force without a goal?

Give us, we cry, a pilgrimage of pain,
However long, so it be not in vain!

Show us a task, however desperate,
So that our labour be not all for nought !
We would not mourn a lot, however hard,
If we were sure we had a trust to guard ;
We could fight on, careless of our own fate,
If we were sure that not in vain we
fought.

But we have looked upon the ants and bees,
And asked ourselves if we be more than
these,
Who haply find their sunlit hours sweet,
And for their common weal their lives
lay down.
We ! we who claim to be the Lord's elect ;
We ! we the vile, the outcast, and the wrecked ;
We ! the gay rabble of a Paris street ;
We ! the low millions of a Chinese town.

Then, in disdain of all the shame and strife,

We wish no more to be a part of life.

The vital force that we miscalled a soul

Ebbs, and our feet grow weary ; we would
rest.

Since toil and sacrifice can but avail

To nurse a hope that in the end must fail,

Better, we cry, the graveyard for a goal

Than any further hopeless, aimless quest.

Now is the test of faith : there was no room

For faith when life put forth its vernal bloom,

And brave adventures promised to fulfil

Our dreams, and danger made us long to
prove

Our fighting strength ; but now that we have

spent

Our treasure and beheld our punishment,
Oh! now, when we already feel the chill
Of death, and hear the passing bell of love,

Now while the laws no deeds nor prayers can
move

Bear witness against all we long to prove,

Now is the test of faith :—still to be true

To those great purposes our dreams have
shown ;

And, as a son defends a mother's name

Although a thousand voices cry her shame,

Because he knows the heart they never
knew,

Still, still to trust the life whence springs
our own.

We have beheld the evil and the good,
And know, ourselves, the strength of wrong
withstood.

May it not be that God is everywhere
Striving Himself against eternal wrong ?
May it not be that on that battle-field
He needs the help of those His love would
shield ?

May not His arm be bound by our despair ?
May not our courage help to make it
strong ?

Come ! ere strength fail us, be it ours to guard
That good which now can be upheld or
marred,—

Tending, it may be, in our earth-born dust,
The mortal seed of some immortal bloom.
Come ! can we dare to pause or hesitate

When we may be the conquerors of fate,—

When fighting on God's side for life's great
trust

Our victory may break the bonds of
doom?

And if no hope appears, yet having seen
Dreams of what should be and what might
have been,—

If as a crippled battle-ship that sinks,
 Flying her fighting colours to the fleet,
We face the end,—is there no fountain-head
Of strength divine from which such strength is
 fed?

Must not our lives be bound with unseen
links

To some great heart that cannot know
 defeat.

CHILDREN'S FAITH

GREAT teachers had we in our youth,
Great lessons learned we unaware.
Faith, sure enough to laugh at Truth,
If Truth had not been also fair,
Was ours : we clasped the very hand
That shaped the worlds, and read complete
The secret of the Love that planned,
In flowers that grew about our feet.

Our instincts made immortal claims ;
Our spirits touched the infinite ;
We breathed the breath of spacious aims,
But lowly things were our delight.

No load had seemed too great to bear
But in our kinship with the sod,
Our weakness gave us hearts to share
The vast humanity of God.

A RUINED CHAPEL

A few stones piled together long ago,
And fallen again to ruin, have a charm
To hallow all the world. The sweetest sounds
Are those most near akin to silences,
Such as sea whispers rippling at the prow
When the loud engine ceases, muffled bells,
Or wandering waves of dying harmony
In echoing minsters ; and the sweetest notes
Of Life are those that reach us from afar,—
Those wafted whispers of humanity
And Love and Death, that none can ever hear
Amid the mighty voices of the world.

This is a little spot of neutral ground
Beside the pilgrim road, between the world
We know of and the world of which we dream.
The summer wind that blows outside and bends
The flowers that grow upon the chancel wall
Sounds far away ; the sunbeams falling here
Look other than the common light that floods
The meadowlands beyond, and overhead
The roof of noonday sky is all its own.
The story written now upon these walls
Is not of scenes in long forgotten hours :
Another meaning and another life
Which keeps that past within it, as a tree
Hides vanished sunlight, has outlived the old :
These ruins hold our hearts, not theirs who
built.
For though erewhile I fell into a dream
Of summer on a morning long ago,

Saw knightly men and noble ladies cross
The sward of green and climb the winding stair
And enter at the doorway one by one ;
Though of their fellowship a while I seemed,
Knelt there at matins, watched the sunlight fall
Through the dim traceries, and stain the floor
With rose and gold where now the grass is
green,—

I looked for something which I could not find,
There was a want of something I had known,
An emptiness at heart, as though all life
Had dwindled from its high significance.
And soon the sound of the Gregorian
Grew ghostly in my ears ; the simpler faith
My soul accepted in that former world
Was troubled, and once more the chapel walls
Were ruined, and the infinite blue sky
Became a roof above the empty nave.

But lo ! the wind, which was the same soft
wind

That roamed about the chapel walls of old,
Had gathered from the ages a new voice
And breathed the soul of an unfathomed life ;
The skies were deeper ; in the wayside flowers
The beauty dreaming at the heart of things
Seemed nearer than before ; and in my heart
Beat the strong pulses of the larger hope,
The grander sorrows, the sublimer wrongs,
The nobler freedom and the truer love,
Which the great world has won upon its way
And learned from century to century.

Nay ! from our world we cannot long escape,—
Its voices are around me, even here
Within the ruined cloisters of the past ;
But here to pilgrim wayfarers they sound

No longer clamorous and harsh, but met
By dreams of the eternal and unknown
They make a whispered music in our ears,—
Even as sea-tides flowing up the stream
Meet the strong rapids breaking among rocks,
And lull their tumult to a rippled song.

NORTH AND SOUTH

IN foam of rose the long waves broke below
The lemon trees, and gold and amethyst
The inland mountains gleamed.

It was the land we dreamed of long ago ;
But now we looked on it we somewhere missed
The light of which we dreamed.

Beside the oleander and the clove,
And alien midst many a flaming plant
Of gold and cinnabar,
Beyond the garden stood a black-green grove
Of pine-trees, set by some old emigrant
Who knew the polar star.

The shadows deepened in that land unknown ;
And presently great stars appeared above
In unfamiliar deeps.

The wind's voice and the water's undertone
Were soft as a forgotten touch of love
That comes to one who sleeps.

The night began the garden scents to steal ;
The sea grew silver in the rising moon,
And violet the sky.
We looked on splendour that we did not feel ;
Strange charms, to which our souls were not
in tune,
Touched us and drifted by.

Then the wind rose and from the pines drew
forth
Ancestral whispers of their land of birth,—

Dark heath and stormy shore ;
And all the wistful magic of the north
And all the old enchantment of the earth
Enfolded us once more.

The north interpreted the south : dreams
dreamed
In childhood gave reality its soul,
And filled the earth again
With vanished wonder ; while far off I seemed
To hear wild seas beyond a pine-wood roll
At dusk in wind and rain.

INTERPENETRATIONS

LARKS sang up in the morning sky,

Wild flowers shone in the dew :

The joy that dwells at the heart of things

The birds and the wild flowers knew.

The sea-waves broke on a lonely shore,

The wind went over the trees :

The sorrow that dwells at the heart of things

Was known to the winds and seas.

The sorrow borne on the wind's song

The note of a bird made sweet ;

And the broken song of the breaking waves

Seemed written in blue and golden staves

In the flowers that grew at our feet.

Secrets hid from the flowers of the field
In the wandering wind we heard ;
And the stars of gold and the bells of blue
Of the wild flowers, gave us again the clue
That we missed in the song of the bird.
And something the winds and seas forgot
And the wild flowers left untold
Lay dim in the rose of the twilight sky
And shone in the starlight's gold.

For the meaning that dwells in all things,
The story of every heart,
Is the same,—the infinite story of all
Whereof each telleth a part :—
Tidings mightier, graver,
Than a single voice can utter,
Too deep and solemn a secret
To sleep in a single breast ;

But the voice of each makes truer
The voices of all the rest ;
And each repeats of the story
The part that it loves the best.

LIFE AND LOVE

WEEDS and flowers grow and die ;

Sunlight never is withholden.

There were flowers long ago,

Others coming by and by :—

Do they for the light's sake grow,

Or for their sake is it golden ?

Hope and sorrow, joy and strife,

Years and pleasures new and olden

Leave us : Love alone has stayed.

Grew then Love because of Life ?

Or was Love for Life's sake made,

But for it were unbehoden ?

BRICK HORIZONS

HERE the old map a woodland marks,
With rivers winding through the hills ;
And prints remain of spacious parks,
And gabled farms and watermills.

But now we see no fields to reap,
No flowers to welcome sun and rain :
The hillside is a cinder heap,
The river is an inky drain.

The modern town of red brick streets,
Row beyond row, and shelf on shelf,
On one side spreads until it meets
A town as dreary as itself ;

And on the other side its arms
Of road and tramway are out-thrust,
And mutilate the fields and farms,
And shame the woods with noise and dust.

Here, from the scenes we love remote,
Dwell half the toilers of the land,—
The soul we think of as a vote,
The heart we speak of as a hand.

Dull sons of a mechanic age
Who claim but miss the rights of man,—
They have no dreams beyond their cage,
They know not of the haunts of Pan.

Here, wandering through mills and mines
And dreary streets each like the last,
Enclosed by brick horizon lines,
I found an island of the past.

A few sad fields, a few old trees,
In that new world of grime and smoke
Told me the time was springtime ; these
Alone remembered and awoke.

And in the grass were stars and bells,
The immemorial blossomings
That spring to greet us from the wells
Of Beauty at the heart of things.

A lark sang overhead, its note
Had the same joy with which it fills
The morning, when we hear it float
Through crystal air on thymy hills.

We mar the earth, our modern toil
Defaces old and lovely things ;
We soil the stream, we cannot soil
The brightness of Life's fountain springs.

Here where man's last progressive aim
Has stamped the green earth with the brand
Of want and greed, and put to shame
Her beauty, and we see the land

With mine and factory and street
Deformed, and filled with dreary lives,—
Here, too, Life's fountain springs are sweet :
Our venture fails, God's hope survives.

And in the heart of every child
Born in this brick horizon ring
The flowers of wonderland grow wild,
The birds of El Dorado sing.

FIRST PATHWAYS

WHERE were the pathways that your childhood
knew?—

In mountain glens? or by the ocean strands?
Or where, beyond the ripening harvest land,
The distant hills were blue?

Where evening sunlight threw a golden haze
Over a mellow city's walls and towers?
Or where the fields and lanes were bright
with flowers,

In quiet woodland ways?

And whether here or there, or east or west,
That place you dwelt in first was holy
ground ;
Its shelter was the kindest you have found,
Its pathways were the best.

And even in the city's smoke and mire
I doubt not that a golden light was shed
On those first paths, and that they also led
To lands of heart's desire.

And where the children in dark alleys penned,
Heard the caged lark sing of the April
hills,
Or where they dammed the muddy gutter
rills,
Or made a dog their friend ;

Or where they gathered, dancing hand in hand,
About the organ man, for them, too, lay
Beyond the dismal alley's entrance way,
The gates of wonderland.

For 'tis my faith that Earth's first words are
sweet
To all her children,—never a rebuff;
And that we only saw, where ways were
rough,
The flowers about our feet.

HIDDEN PATHS

YOU see a house of weathered stone,
A pillared gate, a courtyard wide,
And ancient trees that almost hide
The garden wild and overgrown ;
You see the sheltering screen of pines
Beyond the farmyard and the fold,
And upland cornfields waving gold
Against the blue horizon lines ;
But we of every field and wall
And room are now so much a part,
We seem to touch a living heart
And rather feel than see it all.

You pass the broken arch that spanned
The garden walk,—you note the weeds,
But miss our secret path that leads
To hidden nooks of wonderland ;
And, where the faded rooms you mark,
You know not of the ancient spell
That o'er them in the firelight fell
When all the world outside was dark.

Elsewhere is your enchanted ground,
Your secret path, your treasure store ;
And those who sojourned here before
Saw marvels we have never found.
For Earth is full of hidden ways
More wondrous than the ways it shows,
And treasures that outnumber those
For which men labour all their days.

THE PATHS OF THE INFINITE

HAVE we not marked Earth's limits, followed
its long ways round,
Charted our island world, and seen how the
measureless deep
Sunders it, holds it remote, that still in our
hearts we keep
A faith in a path that links our shores with a
shore unfound ?

No quest the venturer waits, no world have we
to explore ;
But still the voices that called us far over
the lands and seas

Whisper of stranger countries and lonelier
deeps than these,

In the wind on the hill, and the reeds on the
lake, and the wave on the shore.

Never beyond our Earth shall the venturer find
a guide :

From the golden light of the stars, but not
from the stars, a clue

May fall to the Earth ; and the rose of eve
and the noonday blue

Veil with celestial beauty the fathomless deeps
they hide.

They have their bounds those deeps, and the
ways that end are long ;

But the soul seeks not for an end,—its
infinite paths are near ;

116 THE PATHS OF THE INFINITE

Over its unknown seas by the light of a
dream we steer,
Through its enchanted isles we sail on an
ancient song.

Here, where a man and a maid in the dusk of
the evening meet,
Here, where a grave is green and the larks
are singing above,
The secret of life everlasting is held in a
name that we love,
And the paths of the infinite gleam through the
flowers that grow at our feet.

A DESERTED HOME

HERE where the fields lie lonely and untended,
Once stood the old house grey among the
trees,

Once to the hills rolled the waves of the corn-
land—

Long waves and golden, softer than the sea's.

Long, long ago has the ploughshare rusted,
Long has the barn stood roofless and forlorn;
But oh ! far away are some who still remember
The songs of the young girls binding up the
corn.

Here where the windows shone across the
darkness,

Here where the stars once watched above
the fold,

Still watch the stars, but the sheepfold is
empty;

Falls now the rain where the hearth glowed
of old.

Here where the leagues of melancholy lough-
sedge

Moan in the wind round the grey forsaken
shore,

Once waved the corn in the mid-month of
autumn,

Once sped the dance when the corn was on
the floor.

BEYOND THE FARTHEST HORIZON

WE have dreamed dreams beyond our comprehending,

Visions too beautiful to be untrue ;

We have seen mysteries that yield no clue,
And sought our goals on ways that have no
ending.

We, creatures of the earth,
The lowly born, the mortal, the foredoomed
To spend our fleeting moments on the spot
Wherein to-morrow we shall be entombed,
And hideously rot,—

We have seen loveliness that shall not pass ;

We have beheld immortal destinies ;

We have seen Heaven and Hell and joined
their strife ;

Ay, we whose flesh shall perish as the grass
Have flung the passion of the heart that dies
Into the hope of everlasting life.

Oh, miracle of human sight !

That leaps beyond our earthly prison bars
To wander in the pathways of the stars
Across the lone abysses of the night.

Oh, miracle of thought ! that still outsweeps
Our vision, and beyond its range surveys
The vistas of interminable ways,
The chasms of unfathomable deeps,
Renewed forevermore, until at last
The endless and the ended alike seem
Impossible, and all becomes a dream ;
And from their crazy watch-tower in the vast

Those wild-winged thoughts again to earth
descend
To hide from the unfathomed and unknown,
And seek the shelter love has made our own
On homely paths that in a graveyard end.
Oh, miracles of sight and thought and dream !
You do but lead us to a farther gate,
A higher window in the prison wall
That bounds our mortal state :
However far you lift us we must fall.
But lo ! remains the miracle supreme,—
That we, whom Death and Change have shown
our fate,
We, the chance progeny of Earth and Time,
Should ask for more than Earth and Time
create,
And, goalless and without the strength to
climb,

Should dare to climb where we were born to
gropes ;
That we the lowly could conceive the great,
Dream in our dust of destinies sublime,
And link our moments to immortal hope.

No lesson of the brain can teach the soul
That 'twas not born to share
A nobler purpose, a sublimer care
Than those which end in paths without a goal ;
No disenchantment turn it from the quest
Of something unfulfilled and unpossessed
O'er which no waters of oblivion roll.
But not in flight of thought beyond the stars
Can we escape our mortal prison bars :
There the unfathomable depths remain
Blind alleys of the brain :
The sources of those sudden gleams of light

That merge our finite in the infinite,
We look for there in vain ;
For not upon the pathways that are barred
But those left open,—not where the unknown
quest
Dismays the soul, but where it offers rest,
Are set those lights that point us heavenward.

So, let us turn to the unfinished task
That earth demands, strive for one hour to keep
A watch with God, nor watching fall asleep,
Before immortal destinies we ask.
Before we seek to share
A larger purpose, a sublimer care,
Let us o'ercome the bondage of our fears,
And fit ourselves to bear
The burden of our few and sinful years.
Ere we would claim a right to comprehend

The meaning of the life that has no end
Let us be faithful to our passing hours,
And read their beauty, and that light pursue
Which gives the dawn its rose, the noon its
blue,
And tells its secret to the wayside flowers.

Our eyes that roam the heavens are too dim,
Our faithless hearts too cumbered with our
cares
To reach that light ; but whoso sees and dares
To follow, we must also follow him.
Our heroes have beheld it and our seers,
Who in the darkest hours foretold the dawn.
It flashes on the sword for freedom drawn :
It makes a rainbow of a people's tears.
The vast, the infinite, no more appal
Him who on homely ways has seen it fall :

He trusts the far, he dowers the unknown
With all the love that Earth has made our own,
And all the beauty that his dreams recall :
For him the loneliest deeps of night it cheers ;
It gathers in its fold the countless spheres,
And makes a constant homelight for them all.

A HALT ON THE WAY

A PAUSE, a halt upon the way !

A time for dreaming and recalling ;

We bore the burden of the day,

And now the autumn night is falling.

A halt in life ! a little while

In which to be but a beholder,

And think not of the coming mile

And feel not, " I am growing older."

A stern old man with wrinkled brow,

Urging us on with beckoning finger,

Time seems no longer—rather now

A sweetheart who would make us linger.

Old times are with us,—long ago ;
Upon the wall familiar shadows ;
We find again the haunts we know,
The pleasant pathways through the meadows.

And as we turn and look ahead,
Seeking beyond for things departed,
And dream of pathways we must tread
In days to come through lands uncharted,

Old faiths still light us on our way,
Old love and laughter, hope and sorrow,—
As evening of the Northern day
Becomes the morning of to-morrow.

OLD LANDMARKS

THE log flames, as they leap and fall,
Cast ancient shadows on the wall ;
Again I hear the south-west blow
About the house, as long ago
We heard it, when we gathered round
The hearth made homelier by the sound
That in the chimney caverns keened
And told of things the darkness screened.
Dim in their panels round the room
The old unchanging faces loom ;
And soft upon the crimson robe,
The hand that rests upon a globe,
The dusky frames, the faded tints,

The flicker of the hearth-light glints.
Out in the yard familiar tones
Of voices reach me ; on the stones
A waggon rumbles, and a bark
Welcomes an inmate from the dark.
It might be twenty years ago,
So much of all we used to know
Remains unchanged ; and yet I feel
Some want that makes it half unreal.
For we who long ago were part
Of all we knew, the very heart
Of all we loved, let somewhere slip
The bonds of that old comradeship.
The past awakes ; but while I muse
Here in the same old scenes, I lose
The paths to which we once had clues.

Along familiar ways we went
All day, at every turn intent
To mark where Time had made a theft,
Or undisturbed our treasure left.

Here an old tree was down, and there
A roof had fallen, a hearth was bare,
Where once we saw amid the smoke
The glowing turf, the kindly folk.

Here one we had watched beside the plough
Stride with his horses, hobbled now ;
And here there strode a full-grown man
Where once a bare-legged urchin ran.

And where was now that girl whose feet
Once made yon mountain path so sweet ?
Whose shyness flushed her cheek, the while
The mischief hidden in her smile
Belied it ? I behold the spot
Where once she passed but now is not,

The grey rocks, where the mountain breeze
Fluttered the skirts about her knees.
We passed beside the wheelwright's door
Where, as it used to be, the floor
Was piled with shavings, and a haze
Of dusty motes made dim the rays
Of sunlight, and the air was sweet
With smell of new-sawn wood and peat.
We heard the smithy anvil clink,
And saw the fire grow bright and sink
In answer to the bellows' wheeze,
While, as of old, between his knees
The smith a horse's fetlocks drew,
And rasped the hoof and nailed the shoe.
Here, and at every place of call,
The welcome that we had from all,
The pleasant sound of names outgrown
By which in boyhood we were known,

Quick springing to their lips, a look
That backward to old meetings took
Our thoughts, a word that brought to mind
Something for ever left behind,—
All, though they blessed us, touched the
springs
Of tears at the deep heart of things.

We saw the mountains far away,
Beyond whose blue horizons lay
The wonderlands of which we dreamed
Of old ; and still their barrier seemed
To tell us of the pilgrim quest,
And things remote and unpossessed,—
Not of that world which on our hearts
Had marked its bounds and graved its charts.
They told us of that unknown shore
That none can find ; but where, before,

They called us o'er the world to roam,
They now seemed sheltering walls of home.
And those old paths whose ends we sought
Were dearer for themselves than ought
Their ends foretold : no truth could harm
Their beauty or undo their charm ;
No disillusionments of the far
Could touch their homeliness, or mar
The love that made them what they are.

Here we were children : here in turn
Our children in the same paths learn
The secrets of the woods and flowers,
And dream the dreams that once were ours.
Their vision keen renews our own,
Their certainties our doubts atone,
And, sharing in their joys, we weave
The years we find with those we leave.

A little weary, glad of rest
Ourselves, our hearts are in their quest.
Pilgrims of life, whose steps have slowed,
We love to linger on the road,
Or reach the welcome stage, while they
Are eager for the unknown way.
Some time to come their thoughts will turn
To these wild winter nights, and yearn
For something lost and left behind,
As now I turn.—I hear the wind
Keen in the chimney as of old,
And darkness falls on field and fold ;—
I catch the clue, on scenes that were
I look not backward,—I am there !
The men are gone, the gates are barred,
We steal across the empty yard,
The cattle drowse within their stalls,
The shelter of our homestead walls

*Is round us, and the ways without
Are filled with mystery and doubt.
Over the hidden forest sweeps
The wind, and all its haunted deeps
Are calling, and we do not dare
Farther beyond our walls to fare
Than o'er one field, the sheds to gain
Where, sheltered from the wind and rain,
The watchful shepherd and his dogs
Still tarry, and a fire of logs,
A lantern's light, a friendly bark,
Make us an outpost in the dark.
I miss the way ! I drop the clues !
Through mists of years again I lose
My childhood, and alone I sit
And watch the shadows leap and flit
Above the hearth. The world that lies
Beyond our homely boundaries*

I know, and in the darkness dwell
No hidden foes, no wizard spell.
But still the starry deeps are crossed
By lonelier paths than those we lost ;
Still the old wonder and the fear
Of what we know not, makes more dear
The ways we know ; and still, no less
Than in my childhood's days, I bless
The shelter of their homeliness.

Amid the boundless and unknown
Each calls some guarded spot his own ;
A shelter from the vast we win
In homely hearths, and make therein
The glow of light, the sound of mirth,
That bind all children of the earth
In brotherhood ; and when the rain
Beats loud upon the window-pane,

And shadows of the firelight fall
Across the floor and on the wall,
And all without is wild and lone
On lands and seas and worlds unknown,—
We know that countless hearthlights burn
In darkened places, and discern,
Inwoven with the troubled plan
Of worlds and ways unknown to man,
The shelter at the heart of life,
The refuge beyond doubt and strife,
The rest for every soul outcast,
The homely hidden in the vast;
And doubt not that whatever fate
May lie beyond us, soon or late,
However far afield we roam,
The unknown way will lead us home.

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